

CLAIMS

1. A two-way communication system which provides program information to be distributed for a CATV subscriber from a program information provider in a predetermined broadcasting system through a CATV network, and returns return information from the CATV subscriber to the program information provider, comprising:

return information reception unit, provided in a CATV center connected to the CATV network, for receiving the return information returned from the CATV subscriber;

return information process unit, provided in the CATV center, for processing the return information received by said return information reception unit, and transmitting the information to the program information provider; and

return information generation/transmission unit, provided in a home of the CATV subscriber, for generating the return information, and transmitting the information to the CATV center.

2. The two-way communication system according to claim 1, wherein

said process performed on the return information by said return information process unit is adding supplementary information to the return information, or replacing the return information with the supplementary information.

3. The two-way communication system according to claim 2, wherein

said CATV center comprises a database storing contract information about the CATV subscriber for use in using the CATV network, and

said return information process unit generates the supplementary information according to personal information contained in contract information about the CATV subscriber stored in the database.

4. The two-way communication system according to claim 2, wherein

said return information process unit converts the return information input by the CATV subscriber in a simple format into the supplementary information in accordance with a detailed format.

5. The two-way communication system according to claim 1, wherein

said process performed on the return information by said return information process unit is performing an aggregating process on the return information returned from a plurality of CATV subscribers.

6. The two-way communication system according to claim 1, wherein

when an answer in a short time is requested, said return information process unit transmits the return information itself to the program information provider.

7. The two-way communication system according to claim 6, wherein

said return information process unit transmits a result of processing the return information after completing transmission of the return information.

8. The two-way communication system according to claim 1, wherein

said program information provider is a public organization, and

said return information is an application for a service to be provided by the public organization.

9. The two-way communication system according to claim 1, wherein

a public telephone line is used as an up line for transmission of the return information from said return information generation/transmission unit to the CATV center.

10. The two-way communication system according to claim 1, wherein

a transmission line contained in the CATV network is used as an up line for transmission of the return information from said return information generation/transmission unit to the CATV center, and said return information is transmitted to the transmission line using a cable modem.

11. The two-way communication system according to claim 10, wherein

an area having a transmission line frequency at or higher than 770 MHz is used as a band of a signal contained in the return information.

12. The two-way communication system according to claim 4, wherein

a home of the CATV subscriber is provided with program information reception unit for receiving the program information, a television set for displaying contents of the program information received by said program information reception unit, and a remote controller having a plurality of operation keys which can be operated with the contents of the program information displayed and viewed on the television set, and

said CATV subscriber inputs the return information by operating the plurality of operation keys provided on the remote controller with an input screen in the simple format displayed on the television set.

13. The two-way communication system according to claim 1, further comprising

transmission timing designation unit for specifying a transmission timing for the return information corresponding to each of the plurality of CATV subscribers, thereby dispersing reception timings of the return information received by said return information reception unit.

14. The two-way communication system according to claim 1, further comprising

path switch unit for selectively activating a plurality of paths through which the return information corresponding to each of the plurality of CATV subscribers is transmitted, thereby dispersing reception timings of the return information received by said return information reception unit.

15. The two-way communication system according to claim 1, wherein

a predetermined additional rate is set corresponding to a service of processing the return information by said return information process unit, and the additional rate is collected from the CATV subscriber who receives the process service.

16. The two-way communication system according to claim 1, wherein

a predetermined additional rate is set corresponding to a service of processing the return information by said return information process unit, and the additional rate is collected from the program information provider who receives the process service.

17. The two-way communication system according to claim 12, wherein

said return information generation/transmission unit has memory storing information about a plurality of simple formats any of which can be selected, and selectively displays contents on an input screen in each of a plurality of simple formats on the television set at an instruction from the CATV subscriber.

18. The two-way communications system according to claim 3, wherein

said personal information contains information about a family configuration of the CATV subscriber,

said return information generation/transmission unit generates the return information containing first identification information specifying the CATV subscriber, and second identification information specifying a member of the family of the CATV subscriber, and

said return information process unit generates the supplementary information according to the first and second identification information contained in the return information.

19. The two-way communication system according to claim 4, wherein

said detailed format is set by the program information provider, and

said system further comprises detailed format collection unit, provided in the CATV center, for automatically fetching the detailed format having contents newly set by the program information provider.